A REPLY TO AN ANSWER TO THE City-Miniſter's Letter FROM HIS COUNTRY FRIEND.

WHat! more Letters ſtill? Yes, one more, 'tis but common Civility, when the City-Miniſter ſends to his Friend in the Country, that the Country-Parſon ſhould anſwer the City-Miniſter again, elſe it would be ſaid, That the Country-Parſons are Country-Parſons indeed, and have no Manners. They were not true Church of *England*-Men without the Performance of due Ceremonies: A moſt kind Correſpondence, a moſt harmonious Agreement! The City-mouſe ſends to the Country-Mouſe, & the Country-mouſe ſends to the City-Mouſe again. Nevertheleſs, theſe Sham-letters from Friend to Friend, for as ſuch they muſt be looked upon, ſhew ſuch a vitious Humour

of Writing, that the Author must needs be thought to be troubled with a violent Itch of Scribling. And what is all this for, but to Infect the People, not with their Itch of Scribling, but with the Leprosie of their Obstinacy and Disobedience, and to make their Flocks as Scabby as themselves? These City and Country-Ministers see the Grandees of their Coat grow Popular and Gracious in the Eyes of the Mobile; and therefore now's the Time, they cry; our *Dagon* of Ecclesiastical Preeminence is falling, the Philistines are like to seize the Ark of our Worldly Glory; and therefore help Mobile, now or never. And this Sultry Heat of Passion and Self-Interest it is that produces these Caterpillars and Locusts of Letters and Answers, that Prey upon the Blooming Fruits of Royal Industry to settle us in Peace and Tranquility. Among the rest is come forth, a Discontented Sheet of Paper, called, An Answer to the City-Minister's Letter, from his Country Friend; which runs thus.

ANSWER.

SIR,

It is not for me now to acknowledge my private Debt to you for the Favour of your Letter, since the Publick is as much concerned in it as I; and if I may may judge of all, by the compass of my Neighbourhood and Acquaintance, I may assure you, They are not Insensible of your Obligation, though they are ignorant of the Author.

REPLY.

Here is Moral Justice, Thanks for the Letter, and the Proverb fulfilled to boot, *Graculus graculo assidet*; *Like will to like, quoth the Devil to the Collier.* Had the Country-Parson done less, the City-Minister must have been very angry; for it was out of Respect that he sent to his Friend in the Country, and had his Friend failed him this Basket full of Praises by the return of the next Carrier, he had done amiss: And surely the Citiz. *Incognito*, must be strangely tickled, to hear that his Pamphlet took so among the Neighbourhood Here's the Mischief of it, That upon this Encouragement, there will be a Reply to this

this Anſwer, and a Rejoynder to that, and a Sur-rejoynder to that again, and ſo there will be no end of theſe Diſturbing Sham Letters, as long as there is but a Private Preſs in *London* to divulge them. But here is not only a Preſent of Thanks, but a Wiſp of freſh News too, out of the Country; more of the Hiſtory of the Declaration: For ſays the Anſwerer,

ANSWER.

The Country, as far as my Intelligence reaches, has followed the Example of the City, and refuſed to Read the Declaration of Indulgence, according to a certain Order, ſaid to be the Kings, which we in the Country can ſcarce believe to be his; for it has neither been ſignified to the Ordinaries, according to the uſual manner; nor could thoſe that diſperſed it give any account whence it came to them. I have heard indeed, That an Act of Council, concerning it, has been publiſhed in the Gazette; *which I never ſaw, and if I had, I ſhould ſcarce have thought Authentick: For I always took that Paper, as for its Authority, to have been all of a Piece, and that we were no more bound to take notice of any Order publiſhed there, under any Penalty, than we are to believe all the News from* Poland *or* Conſtantinople: *Nay, though this Order had come to us in due Form, yet had we had great reaſon to ſuſpect ſomething of Surreption and Surprize upon his Majeſty in this matter, and that it could not proceed from his Majeſties Free and Full Conſent; for we cannot yet forget his repeated Profeſſions of Kindneſs to us, and of Satisfaction in our Principles and Duty; and having done nothing ſince which might Forfeit his good Opinion; we are unwilling to believe, That it is his Majeſties own Mind and Pleaſure to Load us with ſuch an Order, as we cannot execute with any Congruity, Safety, or Good Conſcience.*

REPLY.

Here is another Proverb fulfilled, *Birds of a Feather will hang together.* There was never any Contagion in the City, but it ſpread it ſelf far into the Country: But why the Anſwerer ſhould take ſuch an Occaſion as this, to quarrel with

the *Gazette*, to ſpoil the Communication of the Gentlemen, in the Country Ale and Coffee-houſes, ſince it is one of the greateſt Divertiſements of the Country-Parſons themſelves, is very ſtrange. There is no Body thinks they were ſo highly obliged to Credit the *Gazette*; however, the Order it ſelf was affixed to the Declaration, and that they ought to have believed. But their Ordinaries would not ſend them abroad, and ſo they were both agreed, the one not to Diſpenſe them, and the other not to receive them, which no way excuſes, but rather heightens the Act of Refractory Diſobedience. But theſe *Thomas*'s are ſo far from Believing the *Gazette*, that they will not Believe the King's Order it ſelf: They have no Faith in *By the Kings moſt Excellent Majeſty, and the Lords of His moſt Honourable Privy Council*; but tax the one with Surprizing, and the other with being Surprized, which is to tax the Council with Colluſion, and the King of a Haughty and Undecent Piece of Arrogance, which none but Perſons of the Anſwerers Temper durſt ever have aſpir'd to: An Inſolence beyond that of the Giants themſelves, thus to Aſſail the very Heaven it ſelf of Soveraignty and Majeſty. As if his Majeſty did not Conſult and Know what was Congruous, Safe and Proper for ſuch a Lettermonger's Conſcience as this, as well as himſelf. And now he comes to the Point, and proudly advancing his Reaſons above the Kings, poſitively tells the World, That his Party cannot execute the Order *with any Congruity, Safety or Good Conſcience*, For,

ANSWER.

I. *As to his Majeſties Declaration, We of all His Majeſties Subjects are the leaſt concern'd in it; and with all Duty be it ſpoken, we cannot ſee, that our Legal Eſtabliſhment receives any Addition by this* Declaration. *For there are yet, Thanks be to God, no* Penal Laws *to which our Congregations are obnoxious, and therefore we do not ſtand in need of any Toleration; yet it is upon Us only that the Reading of it is impoſed. An Act which cannot well be Conſtrued otherwiſe, than as a ſoliciting and tempting our own People to forſake our Communion. If this Declaration muſt needs be Read in any Religious Aſſemblies,*

Aſſemblies, in reaſon ſurely it ſhould be in thoſe that wholly owe their Subſiſtence to it. It would better have become the Roman than the Proteſtant Chappels. But in the Roman Church, Indulgence hath another ſignification; and belongs to thoſe only that frequent their Churches, but not to ſuch as believe them: For with them this is the only Sin that is not capable of Indulgence; but the Prieſts deſire to be excuſed, leſt while they proclaim Toleration to Others, they bring an Interdict upon Themſelves. Or why, I pray, was not Father Pen *Order'd to Publiſh it in his Meetings? Or the worthy Mr.* Lob, *the reputed Father of this Project, why had not He the benefit of his own Invention, and a Patent for being the ſole Publiſher of it within his own Pound? Or why was not my Lord Mayors Private and Elect Congregation thought worthy of ſo great a Grace? Surely it is not to draw upon us the Envyy of the Diſſenters, that the Honour of publiſhing this Declaration is impoſed upon Us alone, when it belongs to all other Communions in the Kingdom except our own; and if we refuſe it, I hope it will be imputed to our Modeſty; for we are not ambitious of being Impertinent, or Buſie-bodies in other Mens Matters.*

REPLY.

There is no weight at all to be laid upon this Argument, either ſeemingly or really. For if the King be Maſter of his own Kingdom, and his own Subjects, he may Order his Declarations to be Read where he pleaſes. Are not they ſole Oppoſers of the King's Conſcience? Are not all the Churches and Chappels of the Kingdom in their Poſſeſſion, which of Primary Right belong to the King? Or elſe why do they pay him Tribute of their Firſt Fruits? And why then may not the King order his own Declarations to be Read in his own Churches and Chappels, to the end that their Congregations as well as other Aſſemblies may be made ſenſible of his Majeſty's univerſal Clemency and Kindneſs to all his Subjects? Not as Trapans, to *tempt the People to forſake the Communion* of the Church of *England*, which is but a groundleſs and ſcandalous Inſinuation of the Anſwerer. And whereas he ſays, the Church of *England*-Men are no way concern'd in the Toleration, ſo much the more reaſon have they to be thankful for the Enjoyment of their Liberty,

Liberty, and to teſtifie their Gratitude, by Reading in their Churches thoſe Orders which the King Commands to be Read; the Refuſal of which is a flat Contempt of Royal Authority, and ſavours rather of Slight and Privacy, then of good Conſcience. So that the *Anſwerer* might have ſpared his Reflexions upon Mr. *Pen* and Mr. *Lob*, and the Lord Mayor's Select Congregation, which do but ſhew the malice of the *Anſwerer*'s Heart; and the grudge he bears to the Indulgence which they enjoy under the favour of Royal Protection. He comes now to a Story, and tells us; That

ANSWER.

A certain Perſon, much Greater than he deſerves, but perhaps not ſo High, is ſaid to have uſed the Words of Rabſhaketh *upon this occaſion, That the Church of* England *Clergy ſhould Eat their own Dung*, Iſa. 36. 12. *This Sentence might better have become a Meſſenger of the King of* Aſſyria, *than a pretended Counſellor of our own Prince, though ſome make a Queſtion to which King he belongs; but God be thanked we are not yet ſo ſtreightly beſieg'd, as to be reduc'd to that Extremity; and though by the permiſſion of God we ſhould be reduc'd to ſo miſerable a Condition, we ſhould, I hope, by the Grace of God, be content to endure that and worſe Extremities, if poſſible, rather than Betray or Surrender the City of God. But before that comes, it is poſſible that the Throat that belch'd out this naſty Inſolence, may be ſtopt with ſomething which it cannot ſwallow.*

REPLY.

As for this Tale of a Tub, or ſtory of a Great Perſon, which he likens to a Meſſenger to the King of *Aſſyria*; other Men have as little reaſon to give credit to it, as he has to believe the News from *Poland* or *Conſtantinople*, in the *Gazette*. But whether true or falſe, they were only Words; not worſe than the late actual Perſecution of the Diſſenters, which was very near reducing many of thoſe People to the ſame Neceſſity, by Impoveriſhing Fines, and Starving Impriſonments. From this ſtory the *Anſwerer* proceeds to his Second Reaſon, in theſe Words,

Anſwer.

ANSWER.

II. *Beſides there are ſome Paſſages in the Declaration, which in Conſcience we cannot Read to our People, though it be in the King's Name; for among others, we are to read theſe words,* We cannot but heartily wiſh, as will eaſily be believ'd, that all the People of our Dominions were Members of the Catholick Church. *Our People know too well the Engliſh of this, and could not but be ſtrangely ſurpriz'd to hear us tell them, That it would be an Acceptable thing to the King, that they ſhould leave the Truth and our Communion, and turn Papiſt. The Wiſh of a King when ſolemnly Declared, is no light inſignificant thing, but has real influence and effect upon the Minds of Men. It was but a Wiſh of* Henry *the Second that cut off* Thomas Becket, *then Archbiſhop of* Canterbury. *Councils and Courts of Juſtice too often bend to a King's Wiſhes, though againſt their own Inclinations, as well as againſt their Rule: And can we imagine that they can have no force at all upon the Common People; therefore we cannot in Conſcience pronounce theſe words in the Ears of the People, whoſe Souls are committed to our Charge. For we ſhould hereby lay a Snare before them, and become their Tempters, inſtead of being their Inſtructers; and in very fair and reaſonable Conſtruction, we ſhall be underſtood to ſolicit them to Apoſtacy, to leave the Truth of the Goſpel, for Fables and the Miſtakes of Men: A reaſonable and decent Worſhip for Superſtition and Idolatry; a true Chriſtian Liberty for the moſt intolerable Bondage both of Soul and Body. If any will forſake our Doctrin and Fellow-Worſhip, which yet is not ours, but Chriſt's, at their own peril be it: But as for us, we are reſolv'd, by the Grace of God, to lay no Stumbling-block in their way, nor to be acceſſory to their Ruine, that we may be able to declare our integrity with St.* Paul, That we are pure from the blood of all men.

REPLY.

Here is a notable Comment, as the *Anſwerer* believes, upon the King's hearty Wiſh. And yet if it be that they themſelves are what they call themſelves, the *Catholick Church*, certainly the King may be thought to wiſh on their ſide, That all the People of his Dominions were of their Opinion. But the *Anſwerer* has div'd deep into the King's meaning, and interprets *Catholick Church* to be *turning Papiſts.* Though grant it were ſo; yet when a Perſon is fully perſuaded of the Truth of the Religion

Religion which he profeſſes, and believes in Conſcience that he is in the Right, it is a uſual thing for ſuch to wiſh that others were of their Perſuaſion: And yet the Wiſh of Princes never made ſuch a Converſion as the Anſwer to the City-Miniſter's Letter dreads, upon the idleſt Surmiſes in the World. Becauſe the Wiſh of a King cut off Archbiſhop *Becket*, therefore the King's Wiſhing, will make the People turn Papiſts. And therefore the Reading of the King's Wiſh, is an Aloes Pill which they cannot ſwallow, not knowing what Influence it may have upon their Congregations. What greater Diſparagement can there be to the laborious Preaching of the Churchmen of *England*, that the People ſhould be ſo ill grounded in their Principles, and ſo wavering and unſtable in their Faith, as to be Wiſh'd out of their Religion? This is a Surmiſe ſo idle, and a Fear ſo void of ſenſe, that the *Anſwerer* may ſeem to have borrow'd this Argument from the Table of *Fortunatus*'s Wiſhing-Cap. But there is another Paſſage in the *Declaration* puts the *Anſwerer* into a great Sweat. For ſays he,

ANSWERER.

III. *In the next place we are to declare in the Kings Name*, That from henceforth the Execution of all, and all manner of Penal Laws, in matters Eccleſiaſtical, for not coming to Church, or not receiving the Sacrament, or for any other Nonconformity to the Religion eſtabliſhed, or for, or by reaſon of the Exerciſe of Religion in any manner whatſoever, be immediately Suſpended, and the further Execution of the ſaid Penal Laws, and every of them, is hereby Suſpended. *What! All, and all manner of Laws in matters Eccleſiaſtical? What the Laws againſt Fornication, Adultery, Inceſt? for theſe are in Eccleſiaſtical matters. What! All Laws againſt Blaſphemy Prophaneſs, open deriſion of Chriſtian Religion? Yet theſe crimes are puniſhable by no other Laws here than ſuch as have been made in favour of the Eſtabliſhed Religion: How ſhall the Lords day be obſerv'd? What ſhall hinder covetous men to Plow and Cart, and follow their ſeveral Trades upon that day? ſince all the Laws, that ſecure this obſervance, and outward countenance of reſpect to the Chriſtian Religion, are by this general expreſſion laid aſide.*

REPLY.

Heaven's bleſs us! What a Din and Noiſe is here about the word *All*, and All to no purpoſe. For the People are to underſtand,

derſtand, that the ſignification of *All Penal Laws in Matters Eccleſiaſtical* is reſtrained, to the Exerciſe ſeperate Worſhip in Matters of Religion. The Abolition of which Laws does not give the leaſt Liberty to Fornication, Adultery, Inceſt, Blaſphemy, or Breach of Sabbath, as the *Anſwerer* ſo vainly and with ſo much out-cry pretends. For all theſe Miſdemeanors are puniſhed as well by Statutes of the Common Law, as by the Eccleſiaſtical Courts. And therefore all theſe Exclamations are merely Scare Crows ſet up againſt Reading the Declaration. Arguments diſtill'd out of the *Anſwerers* Brain, by the Chymiſtry of his burning Zeal for beloved Eccleſiaſtical Tyranny; ſince there is not ſo much as one Law that is in force to ſecure the Obſervance of Divine Worſhip, or outward Countenance of Reſpect to Religion, laid aſide by this General Expreſſion. Beſides that, all new Laws explain themſelves, and ſecure what they would not have repeal'd by all the neceſſary *Proviſo*'s imaginable; and this no Queſtion but the Act for a General Toleration would do, whenever it came out. And therefore the ſame Advice may be given to the *Anſwerer*, which *Ovid* gives his Friend that was afraid of his own Shadow.

Deſine mitem animum vano infamare timore
Sæva quid in placidis Saxa mereris aquis.

But the Anſwerer has found out more Choak-Pears ſtill. For ſays he,

ANSWER.

Beſides theſe words, for not coming to Church, or not receiving the Sacrament, or for any other Nonconformity to the Religon Eſtabliſhed, *cannot in Conſcience be read by us in our Churches, becauſe they may be a temptation to young unguided people to neglect all manner of Religious Worſhip, and give them occaſion of depriving themſelves of ſuch opportunities of grace and ſalvation, as theſe Penal Laws did often oblige them to uſe. For being diſcharg'd attendance on our Service, they are left at liberty to be of any Religion or none at all: Nay Chriſtian Religion is by theſe general terms left at diſcretion, as well as the Church of* England. *For men may forſake us to become Jews or Mahometans, or Pagan Idolaters, as well as to be Papiſts or Diſſenters, for any care taken in this Declartion to prevent it. And even of ſuch as pretend to be Chriſtians, there either are or may be ſuch Blaſphemous Sects, ſo diſhonourable to our Common Lord*

and Maſter, as are incapable of all publick encouragement and allowance; for that would involve the Government in the Imputation of thoſe Blaſphemies, and the whole Nation in that curſe and vengeance of God, which ſuch provocations may extort. Wherefore it is not out of any unreaſonable opinion of our ſelves, nor diſaffection to Proteſtant Diſſenters that refuſe to publiſh this Indulgence, but out of a tender care of the Souls committed to us, eſpecially thoſe of the weaker ſort, to whom we dare not propoſe an Invitation to Popery, and much leſs any thing that may give countenance or encouragement to Irreligion. It is ſaid indeed, that we are not required to Approve, but to Read it: To this, Sir, you have very well anſwer'd, That Reading was Teaching it; or if it be not ſo abſolutely in the nature of the thing; yet in common Conſtruction, I am afraid it would have been ſo underſtood. But we do not ſtand in need of this Excuſe, for if there be any Paſſages in it, that are plain Temptations to Popery or Licentiouſneſs; it cannot conſiſt with our Duty either to God or the Church to Read them before our People.

REPLY.

The Remainder of this Paragraph reſts upon falſe Conſequences and wrong Concluſions. For the words, *for not coming to Church, or not receiving the Sacrament, or for any other Nonconformity to the Religion Eſtabliſhed*, is no temptation to young unguided People to neglect all manner of Religious Worſhip. Nor does the diſcharge of their Attendance on the Service of the Church of *England*, leave them at liberty to be of no Religion at all; as if there were no way to Heaven but the Church of *England* Road. For the Abolition of the Penal Laws does not deſign the Allowance of Licentious Atheiſm, but Chriſtian Liberty. For tho' the words of the Declaration are General, they only refer to a future Act, which the *Anſwerer* may be ſure will be more exactly and particulary penn'd. And indeed Duty and Reſpect to his Prince, would have taught the *Anſwerer* more Manners, than thus all along to build the feeble Structure of his Fears and Jealouſies upon the general Terms of the King's Declaration, loaded with Miſ-conſtruction, and taken in an ill Senſe; more eſpecially ſince they admit ſo eaſily a more candid and ſincere Interpretation; and that indeed it is a meer piece of Folly, if not worſe, to think that His Majeſty by his Indulgence intended to ſet open a Gate for Licence of Irreligion.

Irreligion. Nor is it only Unmannerly bnt Diſingenious, to put the Kings Declaration thus upon the Rack, on purpoſe to extort from it a Confeſſion of Crimes, which was never intended, nor ever ſo much as dreamt of. Beſides, the diſparagement it brings to that which would be thought the choiceſt of the Proteſtant Churches, as if it had abandon'd the Pillars of ſound Doctrin, to lean upon the feeble Supports of Spiritual Tyranny and Penal Laws. So that the refuſing to Read the King's Declaration, can never be thought ſuch a Zealous Care of Souls, as the Anſwerer pretends, but a Zealous Agony to pull down one Pope, and ſet up in his room as many Popes as there are Pariſh-Churches in the Kingdom.

ANSWER.

As for the Diſpenſing Power, and the Oaths and Teſts required to Qualifie Men for Offices Military and Civil, I muſt leave them to the Conſideration of thoſe who are nearer concern'd, and therefore reaſonably preſum'd to underſtand them better. Nor do I envy his Majeſty the uſe of his Popiſh Subjects, though I do not know what Service they may be capable of doing more than other Men. This Nation has for ſome Time made hard Shift to ſubſiſt without much of their aid, and againſt the Wills of ſeveral of them: But now they are become the only neceſſary Men, and ſeem to want nothing but Number to fill all Places Military and Civil in the Kingdom; in the mean Time, the Odiouſneſs of their Perſons, and the Inſolence of their Behaviour, with their way of Menacing of Strange things, makes ſome Abatement of the Merit of their Service.

REPLY.

As for what the Anſwerer here leaves to the Conſideration of thoſe that are *nearer concern'd*, there needs no further Replication to it. And for his granting his Majeſty ſo kindly, the uſe of his Subjects, let them thank him, that are moſt *nearly* obliged. However, he has given them ſuch a Brand with his Pen, by the Character beſtowed upon them of *Odious*, *Inſolent*, and *Menacers of Strange Things*, as lays a terrible Cenſure upon the Choice of their Perſons: Which ſhews him to have wrote his Anſwer in Heat of Blood, without either Charity or common Civility: And when all comes to all, deſerves no other Anſwer, Than that of *Clodius accuſat Moechos*. But now he comes to his Concluſion.

ANSWER.

ANSWER.

Laſtly, The Reſpect which we have for his Majeſties Service, will not permit us to Read the Appendix to the Declaration: Where the Flower of the Nobility and Gentry of this Kingdom are ſomething hardly reflected on, as Perſons that will not contribute to the Peace and Honour of the Nation; becauſe they would not conſent to the Taking away the Laws againſt Papiſts, that they may be put into a Condition to give us Laws. The Perſons here reflected on, we know to be the Chief for Ability, and Intereſt, and Inclination to ſerve the King, and therefore cannot do his Majeſty that Diſſervice as to be Publiſhers of their Diſgrace, and make our ſelves the Inſtruments of alienating from His Majeſty the Affections of his beſt Subjects. Nay, we find in our ſelves a ſtrange Difficulty to believe that this could come from His Majeſty, who has Experienced their Faithfulneſs upon ſo many and Preſſing Occaſions. This could not well proceed from any but a Stranger to thoſe Honourable Perſons, and the Nation, and a greater Stranger to Shame and Good Manners; and what have We to do to Publiſh the Venom and Virulency of a Jeſuit?

REPLY.

A very reſpectful Concluſion truly; to quarrel with the *Appendix* to the Declaration, which whoſoever reads, muſt certainly acknowledge, that never any thing was ſaid with more Glory, or a more ſtudious and ſolemn Care of the Publick Weal. And yet this Country Parſon, according to his uſual Way of Miſ-conſtruction, will have it to be a hard Reflection upon the Nobility and Gentry of the Kingdom, As *Perſons that will not contribute to the Peace and Honour of the Nation*; and this he calls, the *Venom and Virulency of a Jeſuite*, So Virulently does this ſame Country Sophiſter flatter the Nobility and Gentry at the Expence of Royal Reputation. But ſuch falſe Gloſſes upon the Royal Text as theſe, are too Plain and Notorious to prevail upon the Judgments of the Nobility and Gentry of this Kingdom, who will ſooner believe the candid Expreſſions of their Soveraign than the wreſted Fictions of a Country Expoſitor.

Allowed of, June 27. 1688.

London Printed for *W. M.* M DC LXXX VIII.

235163

XUM